

FIGURE 6B

516

Watch out! Cigarette smoking is unhealthy and a risk for getting heart disease. Please ask your doctor about methods for quitting.

522

Studies show that even a modest daily consumption of alcoholic beverages will help prevent Coronary Artery Disease.

527

You should know: Taking anti-oxidant vitamins could lower your risk of getting coronary artery disease.

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Did you know: Doctors agree that taking daily aspirin could significantly reduce your chances of heart trouble.

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No exercise: If you start exercising for thirty minutes or more at least three times every week, you will lower your risk for getting Coronary ARtery Disease. Ask your doctor about good exercises to try.

535

Watch out! Feeling even a moderat amount of stress adds to your risk of Coronary Artery Disease. Ask your doctor for ideas about reducing stress.

542

Watch out! Your high blood pressure puts you at risk for developing Coronary Artery Disease. Ask your doctor for help in reducing your blood pressure.

582

Homocysteine and heart disease:
Homocysteine is an amino acid in your blood. People who have higher than normal levels of homocysteine in their blood are at a higher risk for heart disease. Even if you do not have a higher than normal level of homocysteine, it is a good idea to get the RDA of folate – because folate (in vitamins B6, B12, and folic acid) can help keep homocysteine at a healthy level. If you aren't sure what your level of homocysteine is, you need to ask your doctor. Please also talk to your doctor about getting enough folic acid.

FIGURE 6C

SMOKING CESSATION

Cigarette smoking may be the most important, preventable cause of illness and death in the United States. The Department of Health and Human Services Agency for Healthcare Policy and Research (AHCPR) and the National Institute of Healthcare (NIH) both have websites with valuable information concerning smoking cessation.

All valid guidelines stress that first and foremost smoking cessation needs to be identified by the smoker as a critical goal. Smokers need to have support from family, friends and co-workers. These individuals need to be committed to smoking cessation. The goal needs to be complete cessation of all tobacco use. Studies have shown that the greatest chance of success occurs when structured programs are used. There are many organizations that have websites that may be helpful e.g. American Heart Association and NIH.

DISLIPIDEMIA

Dislipidemia means an abnormality of one's lipid levels. Lipid levels are usually broken down into four components:

1. Total cholesterol
2. LDL (low density lipoprotein)
3. HDL (high density lipoprotein)
4. Triglycerides

Target levels for total cholesterol and LDL are based on one's risk factor history. Individuals who have known coronary artery disease such as those who have had a heart attack, heart surgery or angioplasty are urged to keep their total cholesterol below 180 and their LDL below 100. Clinical trials have proven that keeping one's levels as low as possible, certainly at the levels suggested will reduce the risk of future events such as myocardial infarction and death. In people who have known coronary artery disease, if one's baseline LDL level is less than 130, it is possible that with diet, exercise and weight control one could bring one's LDL level down to the target range. If, however, baseline LDL is above 130 it is unlikely that diet alone will work. At this point, medication is usually added. You will need to discuss this with your physician. Individuals who do not have known coronary disease or diabetes should consider cholesterol levels between 200 and 240 and LDL levels between 130 and 160 to be borderline high and certainly any numbers above this should be treated under the care of a healthcare professional. Individuals who have a combination of risk factors including: advanced age, hypertension, smoking or positive family history should consider as upper acceptable levels of total cholesterol of 200 and LDL levels of 130mg ldl.

In general, the lower total cholesterol level and the lower LDL level, the lower the risk of future events such as heart attack or stroke. This is true either in the primary prevention mode or secondary prevention risk once coronary artery disease is already known to exist. HDL is another type of cholesterol. Any level above 35mg ldl is considered abnormal and should be treated under the care of a healthcare professional. Triglycerides is another form of lipids. Levels between 200mg per deciliter are considered borderline high, 400-1000mg per deciliter are considered high and over 1,000 are considered dangerously high. Treatment to bring lipid levels under control usually entails a combination of diet, exercise and medication. Diet usually involves some sort of a step 2 AHA diet. This involves reduction of saturated fat. Medications can also be taken to decrease lipid levels. Medications they use today mostly include the Statins. You will need to discuss this with your physician.

Two additional notes:

1. The soy bean industry recently received good news from the Food and Drug Administration. Effective October 26, 1999, the FDA will allow foods containing

soy to claim that they are heart healthy. The science behind this is that it has been concluded that a diet containing 25 grams of soy protein per day in association with an otherwise low fat diet may reduce LDL cholesterol. LDL cholesterol is that portion of cholesterol that is known to be significant in causing cardiovascular disease.

It is reported that a product must contain at least 6.25 grams of soy protein per serving in order to carry the Heart Healthy label. It appears that there will now be a frenzy of food producers using soy and touting their product as heart healthy.

Likewise, health conscientious consumers are expected to gravitate to these products. The soybean industry has also petitioned the FDA to accept the argument that soybean plant chemicals called **isoflavones** likewise decrease the risk of heart disease.

It is expected that the FDA will decide on this argument in the near future. It should be pointed out that the chemicals called **isoflavones** are also present in large concentrations in grape seed extract.

2. Recent research has found that people with mild to moderate elevated cholesterol levels can reduce these levels by consuming soluble fiber and adhering to the American Heart Association Step I Diet. Cholesterol levels may fall by as much as 10%. The most common form of soluble fiber studied is Psyllium. This is a naturally occurring substance derived from the Psyllium seed.